

REVENGE OF THE WIND.

The winds refused to blow;
"No use," said they, "to try
From north or south or east or west
These folks to satisfy."
The north wind is "cold."
The east wind "bold and rough."
The east is "chilly," they complain;
The south "not cool enough."
And so the windmills stopped,
And ships lay idly;
The sun beat down from morn till night
Because no clouds could fly.
The north wind is "cold."
"Blow hot or cold," said they,
From north or south or east or west;
"Twill be the wisest way!"
—Youth's Companion.

The Last Cruise of the Little Mother

By JOHN H. RAFFERTY

Tom Claffin was 16 years old when his family moved from Chicago to San Diego, Cal. His father, a consumptive, was no longer able to work. His mother, a tiny, cheerful, busy woman, with three small children besides Tom, had her hands full with nursing her husband, making, mending, cooking and caring for the family. They had been in their new home for three months, living away their small capital and with no prospect of earning a dollar. The boom was over. The town was overrun with easterners, men and women in frail health, willing to work for small pay at anything that would yield them sustenance. And so Tom, the hope of his courageous little mother, had tried everything and failed to get work.

It was then that he hit upon the idea of becoming a fisherman. For a week before he broached the subject at home he had patrolled the shore from Point Loma to the Coronado beach in search of a boat. He had only \$15, and of the scores of small craft that could be bought at all there was but one within his means. A leaky lugger, with frayed old sails and an impossible Spanish name, stinking of fish and with a dirty black hull, lay moored off the Portuguese village on the north shore of the bay, and thither day after day poor Tom trudged, big with his secret.

One Saturday night he startled the family with:

"Well, people, I'm a sea captain at last, and no joke. Mother, behold your son, Captain Thomas Claffin of the good ship Little Mother."

The little woman's blue eyes were filled with tears when her boy showed them the bill of sale to the effect that he had bought a vessel for \$12.50, and thus, like a true blue Chicagoan, risked his all in the only business venture in sight.

"I named her for you, mother, and you must christen her and take a sail in her tomorrow."

With a basket of luncheon and a pail and shovel for clams the Claffin family, with Tom proudly leading the way, went down to the beach in the morning. Sure enough, there lay the Little Mother, swinging gracefully at her moorings, no longer dingy and black, but radiant in a coat of fresh white paint, her sails mended and shipshape, the stars and stripes fluttering from her peak, and her name in bold blue letters across her bows. Tom's little brother and sisters danced with delight, new light came into his father's eyes, and as for "little mother," the patron saint of that first voyage, she laughed and cried by turns as she sat in the stern of the boat and watched Tom, the captain, and little Charley, the "first mate," both bubbling over with excitement and nautical terms, tugging at ropes, running about like regular jack tars and making all ready "to put to sea," as Tom said.

At the boat, driven by a cool sou'east breeze, stood out across the bay for the Loma lighthouse. Tom showed them all the new handpump he had rigged into his little "ship," he explained the centerboard, pointed out the imaginary beauties and qualities of the Little Mother, boasted of what he meant to accomplish as a professional fisherman and made everybody so happy that it seemed no time at all till the sun was dipping into the sea and the first cruise of the Little Mother was over.

And the boy made good money with his modest venture. He would rise with the sun each morning and with his dinner pail and coarse tackle make for the boat that had become to him both sweetheart and provider. His greatest difficulty was his need of an assistant, and many were the barracoua and giant Jewish that escaped him in his lonely all day cruises up and down that matchless summer sea. Sometimes he would induce some lazy wharf idler to accompany him; sometimes old Pedro, the retired Portuguese from whom he had bought the boat, would haul him as he stood out to sea and help him with the work. Sometimes, when the sea was like a floor of gleaming onyx, his father would sit in the stern sheets, and little Charley would "man the jib" or troll a line for small fish, but alone with a crew Tom never failed to bring home at night enough fish so that his earnings at the end of the week were almost enough to pay the running expenses of the frugal little family.

It was in the end of August that the Monterey, the monster coast defense monitor, returned from her first cruise. She had been in South American waters for four months, and the crew got its first shore leave on American soil at San Diego. The big war vessel was thrown open to visitors one Sunday morning, and all that day Tom Claffin carried sightseers from the Santa Fe pier to the Monterey. Good seaman that he was, he was fascinated with the dazzling spiciness of the monitor, and every night while she lay in

port Tom came aboard to revel in the ship talk and yarns of officers and men. He soon knew all the officers by name and had formed a close friendship with a seaman named Hansen, who was half fellow with every man in the crew.

Hansen was killed the night before the Monterey sailed for Frisco. He had gone ashore with a guard to arrest a half breed Mexican steamer who had overstepped his leave. The guard separated to scour the town for the deserter, and Hansen, alone, had the misfortune to corner him in a Chinese dive at the lower end of town. A knife in the dark as he was dragging his prisoner through an alleyway, a panic of chattering Chinamen, who quenched their lamps and bolted their doors, and poor Hansen was left dying in the mire. It is but four miles to the Mexican border from San Diego, and thither it was supposed the murderer had fled.

The mayor of San Diego offered \$200 reward for the capture of Hansen's slayer, the little police force was thrown into a fever of activity, the Monterey delayed her sailing for three days, and then the crime began to be forgotten. Tom sailed out to the fishing grounds every morning with whomsoever he could pick up.

It was nearly a month after the monitor had gone when a lone fisherman sitting at the end of the jetties that reach from the crescent end of Coronado Island hailed him. Young Claffin stood in for the landing and invited the stranger aboard. He wanted something to eat, and the boy, with a sudden flutter in his heart, opened his pail and had the stranger make himself comfortable. They fished all that day with rare luck, and at sundown the Little Mother was deep with her cargo of barracoua. Once under the lee of Point Loma on the homeward trip the breeze died out, and the boat went drifting with the tide. The southern reaches of the entrance to San Diego harbor are covered with sand bars and shallows that extend two miles along the inner side of the Coronado.

The tide ran out while the Little Mother was drifting above these bars, and when darkness fell she went hard aground. A dense fog came with the night. The channel buoys disappeared. The distant lights of the city were blurred and quenched in the thick haze, and by the time flood tide came again it was impossible to steer the boat with certainty or safety.

"We'd better anchor till the fog lifts," said Tom, wondering what his mother would think if he staid out all night.

His comrade sullenly agreed, and so they dropped anchor and lay rocking in the calm cloud of mist for hours. The stranger fell asleep in the bottom of the boat, but Tom, big eyed now, his heart beating with wild excitement, sat in the bow watching. It must have been near midnight when he crept down into the hull and unshipped the little pump. The tide was going out again, and as he dropped the damaged apparatus into the sea he heard the water gurgling into the hold. The stranger was yet sleeping when Tom slipped over the rail, breast high in the water, and headed for shore.

It was 2 in the morning when he reached the police station in San Diego. He was bareheaded and wet, his bedraggled shirt and trousers were clustered with burns and thorns, his feet were bleeding, and he could hardly speak the words:

"Captain, I've got the Mexican that killed Hansen."

It was daylight when they surrounded the scuttled lugger. The Mexican was awake, clinging to the half submerged mainmast. The rickety boat, loaded with fish and bumped by the now running seas, was going to pieces plank by plank. Tom didn't waste a thought over the captured murderer after he saw the police lay hands on him, but he shed a weak, unwilling tear over the wreck of the Little Mother.

"Why did you wreck your boat, Tom?" asked his mother that day while the story of her boy's heroism made him the talk of the town.

"Well, mammy," he said, "I was afraid the Mexican'd get away to sea. I wanted him, you know, but what I wanted most was that \$200 reward. I can buy a new boat for half the money."—Chicago Record-Herald.

Sicily a Natural Garden.

The natural fertility of Sicily is indeed remarkable. Without the use of fertilizers three different growths—olives, vines and wheat—flourish in close proximity, writes a correspondent in the New York Post. Great sections already artificially watered are among the garden spots of the world. The "Piano del Cappuccini" at Trapani, on the western shore, the far famed "Conca d'Oro," near Palermo and the eastern coast north of Catania are sections which surpass in fertility the favored valleys of Tuscany. Already 10,000,000 orange trees, or two-thirds the total number grown in Italy, flourish on the island, while cotton and linseed, the almond, the olive, the carob and the mandarin are extensively raised.

A Literary Treat.

The Bookman recently published a selection from letters received by a large publishing firm in New York from would-be-authors in various parts of the country. Here is a gem:

Dear Sirs—Won't you please let me know why you kept my MSS so long and now return it? Please don't take me for a fool, but a honest young man can't fight the battles of life alone. This I only mention as a short history of my life. If you accept, pay me a snug sum now and remainder years royalty. They go to work and announce in the Patent Sheet and Associated Press Papers that you paid me \$100,000.00 for the MSS. This they will take up as a news item. I will keep off this strictly secret and so can you. Have a short history of my life with a large Picture of me. Under the picture have a few words: "The Unknown Author." Author who must be dead famous and received \$100,000.00 for a few lines of his Pen." Hoping at least to hear from you again, I remain for business, sincerely.

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